

# THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

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## Adventure in Reading

FRANCES CLARKE SAYERS

*School of Librarianship  
University of California, Berkeley, California*

HERE IS another Book Week, with shops and schools and libraries waiting to welcome the books that are tumbling from the presses. It is an exhilarating experience to welcome new books, especially those designed for children. Looking back over a long period of years in which I have been concerned with this delightful business of reading and children, I find myself marking off the passing of the years by the discoveries among the flood of books. There was the year that *Dr. Dolittle* appeared, with its picture of the Push-me-Pull-you, a beast designed to make a big-game hunter of the most timid stay-at-home. There was the year the *Rootabaga Stories* sent us walking Manhattan streets with a different pride in the sky-scrapers, and a deeper sense of the stretch of the American continent. There was the year that brought *The Short History of Discovery*, which was itself a discovery of a life-time, and the year that brought *The Golden Basket*, full of the color of a foreign city, full of the aroma of foreign food. There was the year that brought *Floating Island*, giving me, for all time, an adequate means of expressing delight in the weather. "S'lovely day!" said Mr. Doll, letting the sun-lit air of his tropical island wash over him, wiping out all sense of danger and obligation. That was a dis-

covery of character—Mr. Doll! All friendliness, all amiability, but a person of decision, too, as Mrs. Doll discovered when she insisted that he put his clothes on. All of these books have brought us something fresh and original, something never done before. Each has entered into us, too, in its own way, making life and experience different, and richer. So it is that I look forward once more to the new books, wondering what discovery will mark the year 1937.

At this writing, it is too early to make a selection of the new books, because the returns are not complete, but there are signs in the sky, signs of cause for a bright jubilee. Mary Gould Davis in her *With Cap and Bells* brings together a rare collection of stories designed for laughter. Her introduction is a fine and understanding analysis of the humour of children. Her selection is based upon wide and critical reading, and years of experience in sharing stories with the boys and girls of the New York Public Library.

Phil Stong, the novelist, and author of *Honk the Moose*, this year gives us another authentic and lovable story of American life in his *High Water*, a story of real boys and a little burro. Kate Seredy has delved into the poetry of her racial heritage, and gives us an epic retelling of the legends which grew out of the

migration of the Huns and the Magyars. Her book is called *The White Stag*. Rosalie Slocum, in her *Breakfast with the Clowns* tells an original little story, a story touched with the bright tenderness of a memory from her own cherished childhood. The ever enchanting circus is, of course, the background for this story.

The announcements of the publishers give further hint of a fascinating array of books of information. Wilfred Bronson's *The Wonder World of Ants* and *Sea-Horse Adventure*, by Irmengarde Eberle and Else Bostelmann, are two which compel the reader, through text and picture, to feel the fascination of study in the world of nature. The variety of experience, the wealth of material, the many backgrounds of life made available to children today, through the efforts of authors, publishers, and artists, all reflected in the books of recent years, and promised us, for this year, by the announcements and catalogs, make particularly appropriate the slogan chosen for Book Week of this year, "Reading—the Magic Highway to Adventure."

This brings me to the text, or pretext of this article, reading as adventure. Reading is adventure, one of the most glorious which life has to offer, and anyone who has enjoyed the stretching of barriers, the excitement of new experience, the stimulation of new ideas, which come through reading, will scarcely be content to hug the experience to himself. No, he will be about the business of sharing his experience with others, and so inducing them to find the joy for themselves. The greatest gifts increase by being shared. So it is with reading. But it is an *adventure*. The definition of adventure in Webster's dictionary includes the following: "the encountering of risks . . . a bold undertaking . . . a daring feat." Adventure, then, implies a measure of danger, and a risk of defeat. It is good and right that the adventure of reading contain these elements also: the risk of reading

something which will jog our prejudices, and endanger our complacency; the defeat of stumbling upon a thought or a concept beyond our comprehension. These are experiences worthy a brave reader. But when we use the word "adventure" in connection with the reading of children, we take care to rob it of its tougher meaning, and we "Halliburton-ize" it into something weak and safe. In fine, paradoxical fashion, our modern education makes available to children, through books, all this variety of experience; the accumulated experience of man, the delightful, humorous, poetic fancy of the poet and artist, on the one hand, and, on the other, it forbids them the "feat of daring," the "encountering of risks," "the bold undertaking," by insistence that their reading be too easily understood.

The mechanical approach to the teaching of reading, the attempt to define what words are within the comprehension of children of certain ages, the arbitrary definition of experiences which are meaningful to children—all these activities have had a detrimental effect upon the art of reading. All hazards have been removed, and all ambition, all zest for attacking the unknown. I have little patience with the modern theory that a child must never encounter defeat in his study, in his attempt to read a book. The important truth, to my mind, is not to avoid defeat, but to learn how to meet it; to discover that to meet it on one front is not necessarily to meet it on another. It cannot be ignored. There it is. We must all meet it, at one time or another. It is a hazard of the greatest adventure of all, the adventure of living.

For certain children, in the underprivileged groups, children who have not the ability, the mental equipment to read, I realize that for them, encouragement must be stressed, but these children are a special class, demanding special treatment. They are clinical cases, and the methods used to meet their difficulties

should not be allowed to influence the other groups, to weaken their potential powers. The prerogative of the normal, eager, young mind is to seek danger, adventure; to meet the challenge of the mature world; to meet the challenge of words and ideas; to suck them dry of meaning, or to be lost in the mystery and wonder of only half-understanding.

I am more and more impressed with the lasting power of reading to reveal to children the meaning of life, and to reveal themselves to themselves. The moments of self-realization are the more important, for those are the moments that give the individual his direction.

Bertrand Russell says that the educator makes a great mistake when he considers himself the potter and the child the clay. It is not the educator's task, he says, to shape the child toward some end which the state, or the teacher, or any other authority deems wise and best. It is rather the duty of the educator to help the child attain the ends which he himself instinctively seeks.

"The child's own spirit" so often finds a voice, an articulate expression of the end it seeks, in the written word, come upon as an individual experience, as though no other person than himself were intended to hear the voice of the author. If anyone doubt the almost accidental power of reading, let him read the documentary evidence in Walter de la Mare's *Early One Morning in the Spring* in which we see what sight or sound, what word may serve to unlock life to children. One meets it everywhere, in reading, a mounting testimony to the influence of the reading of one's youth.

After a summer devoted to the subject of children's reading, and a year of teaching that subject, I undertook to enjoy a period of haphazard reading on my own; reading which was to have no relation to my subject. I would forget children's books completely, I thought, and

I chose as my first adventure a novel by Anne Bridge—*Peking Picnic*. In this penetrating book, I discovered the hero quoting to the heroine a poem of Kate Greenaway's, declaring that he had always considered her one of the major poets in the English language. There was no escape for me in that book.

The second book was written by an English archaeologist, Stanley Casson. It was called *Progress and Catastrophe*, and was a brilliant summary of the fate of civilization in the past, in relation to the present and the future. In this book I found reference to the Greek mythology, and was once more reminded of the influence of this subject in the field of reading for children. There was no escape here.

The third book was Rudyard Kipling's *Something of Myself*. I had turned no more than fifteen pages than I came upon his tribute to Mrs. Ewing. At this point I abandoned hope of finding anything that was not related to the meaning of books upon the minds of children.

Kipling first encountered Mrs. Ewing in a volume of *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, and the story was "Six to Sixteen." To that tale, concerned with real people and real things, he said that he owed more, in wisdom and delight, than he could ever tell. He remembers also his pleasure in a book of verse that fed his thirst for wonder. He could never find that book, once it was gone from his childhood. Again, he heard a nurse-maid singing at low-tide, in the sunset, and the song and scene became for him a symbol of wonder, terror and excitement. What song it was he never knew, but it, too, haunted his life. Such is the power of sound and word. These accidentally encountered moments are the moments of self-revelation.

Reading then is much more than a skill, a means of adding words to the vocabulary, a source of information, a means to the end. It is an end in itself;

# A Fourth Grade Book Journey

HELEN PENCE

*Western Teachers College Training School, Macomb, Illinois*

ESTHER SALLEE

*Lafayette School, Jacksonville, Illinois*

THE USE of library books for a reading unit on life in other lands was suggested by the large number of available children's books on people of other lands and by the *Round the World Book Cruise: A Record of Countries Visited and Friends Made*,<sup>1</sup> a pamphlet which is accompanied by a list of books about various countries and which encourages reading by devices of "pass-ports," "visas" and the like.

This unit offered a number of opportunities for desirable individual development: in attitude toward other peoples through an acquaintance with the characters in the stories; in silent reading; in oral reading and spoken language by sharing enjoyable parts of stories; and in written English through letters to be actually sent and through the accounts of the "visits"; in singing songs of other lands; in portraying scenes from the visits through the media of crayola and paper; and in living together in a co-operative undertaking.

To introduce this unit there were displayed about the room many attractively bound and illustrated books on travel, adventure, and life in other lands. These books ranged in difficulty from second grade up, but with the majority of them at third, fourth, and fifth grade levels. When the children came to school they moved about observing the books. Some commented on the pictures; some merely glanced casually at the books. The first request to be permitted to take one of the

books came from an unexpected source. Martin Johnson's *Lion* had attracted the attention of a boy whose silent reading score was one of the highest in the room but whose reading, aside from required work, consisted of reading the sports page. Another boy asked to take *Heidi*, explaining that the third grade teacher had read it to them.

At class time, when the teacher asked if anyone had noticed what kind of books were on display, one child said they were books about other countries. The two children who had started reading *Lion* and *Heidi* were asked to tell what books they had found of special interest to them. The children were then asked if they would care to read out of books about other lands for their reading class. As the idea met with the children's approval, each chose a book. The easier, well-illustrated books of large type were usually chosen. The last boy to select a book could not find one to his liking until he went to the library for a Martin Johnson book. The poorest reader looked at pictures in a few books, but had to be helped to start reading. Another poor reader who had read only under compulsion found that *Little Pear* was a mischievous boy and settled down to interested reading.

When two girls completed picture story books the first day they were shown the *Round the World Book Cruise* notebook. In planning what she would say about the book she had just finished, one of the girls decided she would like to write it on practice paper and polish it before putting it into her cruise book.

<sup>1</sup> By Margaret Gledhill and Mrs. Melbone Graham. Published by the California Division of the American Association of University Women.



The other members of the class were interested in the planning the girls were doing, and the plan to write, polish, and copy in notebooks was approved by the group.

When the class next met, the discussion centered around the children's choices of countries to which book journeys were to be made. From the children's questions about the use of the passports, and how to get them, the discussion moved on to other things we needed to know if we were really going. Other questions concerned the cost of the trip, the boats, the sailings, and needed clothing. The class broke up into groups to try to get the information from travel literature and travel sections of newspapers. Reports were made to the class of the groups' findings.

It was decided to invite one of the faculty members who had made several trips to Europe to give us the information we found difficult to secure and to tell us of her experiences. This necessitated writing her letters; it was understood that all perfect letters would be sent and that the children writing them would act as hosts during her visit to the room. Her visit was so helpful that another traveler was asked. After the visits, notes were written and sent to thank these people for their help.

With the information gathered from these sources, estimates of the cost of a visit to each country listed on the world cruise ticket were made. Itemized accounts of the cost of each trip formed a guide to others visiting the same country. A typical account follows.

## ALBANIA

Passport	\$ 10.00
Trip to New York	22.50
Cost of round trip	323.00
U. S. revenue tax	5.00
Visas	5.00
Tips 10%	10.00
Laundry	16.00
Extra trips	15.00

Museum	6.00
Souvenirs	1.50
Extra spending money	10.00
Total	\$ 424.00

## AFRICA

Passport	\$ 10.00
Trip to New York	22.50
Cost of round trip	1,500.00
U. S. revenue tax	5.00
Visas	10.00
Tips	15.00
Laundry	5.00
Extra trips	80.00
Museums	30.00
Souvenirs	15.00
Spending money	20.00
Total	\$1,712.50

Each day some time was spent in reading and some time in carrying on related activities. Some children became fascinated with coloring their maps and tracing their travel routes. Songs of other lands were rediscovered in their music books and sung and dramatized. The "tourists" measured each other to get heights in feet and inches for the passports. The sitting for a two cent photograph for the passport was a memorable occasion. The punching of the tickets at the right of the name of the country indicated the country visited; a punch to the left indicated a satisfactory report; two punches pointed out the report as exceptionally good.

As the children thought they would like to collect souvenirs of their travels, they became artists and made pictures suggested by their stories. Heidi in the Alps, the Spanish twins, Pancho and his burro, and many other interesting characters were portrayed with crayolas. Pipe stem cleaner dolls were made and dressed to represent characters in the stories.

During the four weeks in which this unit was carried on, some of the better readers read as many as fourteen books. Four was the fewest read by any one child. No emphasis was put on the num-

ber or difficulty of the books to be read. All the good readers read some of the books of the fourth grade level or above. All the children read some of the very attractive picture books. Some poor readers struggled through books too difficult for them, but were carried on through their interest.

The library reserve shelf contained some books which none of the children read. The list actually used by the children follows.

Author	Title	Number of times read	Author	Title	Number of times read
Aanrud	Sidse Longskirt and Solve Sun-trap	1	Kennell	Vanya of the Streets	1
Aulaire	Ola	5	Kaigh	Jungle Babies	1
Aulaire	Children of the Northern Lights	3	King	Kees	6
Baker	Friends around the World	1	King	Kees and Kleintje	6
Bemelmans	Hansi	5	Kuebler	Hansel and the Gander	1
Brann	Nanette of the Wooden Shoes	1	Lattimore	Jerry and the Pusa	2
Brann	Lupe Goes to School	2	Lattimore	Little Pear	5
Carpenter	Our Little Friends of the Arabian Desert	1	Lattimore	Little Pear and His Friends	6
Cole	A B C Book of People	2	Lattimore	Seven Crowns	2
Douglas	Three Boy Scouts in Africa	5	Lee	Pablo and Petra	1
Edwards	aruko, Child of Japan	1	London	Call of the Wild	1
Eyton	Kullu and the Elephant	2	Mirza	Myself When Young	1
Field	Little Dog Toby	2	Morrow	Painted Pig	3
Flack and Weise	Stories about Ping	3	Olcott	Anton and Trini	1
Gay	Pancho and His Burro	4	Olcott	Beppo and Lucia	3
Green	Martin Johnson, Lion Hunter	3	Olcott	Jean and Fanchon	2
Grant	Windmills and Wooden Shoes	3	Olcott	Karl and Gretel	1
Hall	Jan and Betje	2	Olcott	Klaas and Jansje	1
Hader	Jamaica Johnny	3	Olmstead	Ned and Nan in Holland	2
Hader	Chuck-a-Luck and His Reindeer	3	Peary	Snow Babies	1
Hawkes	Silver Sheen	1	Perkins	Philippino Twins	2
Hill and Maxwell	Little Tonino	3	Perkins	Spanish Twins	2
Hutchinson	Flying Family in Greenland	1	Perkins	Swiss Twins	2
Johnson	Camera Trails in Africa	1	Petersham	Miki	2
Johnson	Congorilla	3	Pinchot	Giff and Stiff in the South Seas	2
Johnson	Lion	6	Scott	Kari	1
			Seredy	The Good Master	3
			Smith	Hans and Hilda of Holland	1
			Sowers	Lin Foo and Lin Ching	2
			Sperry	One Day with Manu	2
			Sperry	One Day with Tuktut	4
			Spyri	Heidi	2
			Steffansson	Kak, the Copper Eskimo	2
			Thomas	Pack Train Steamboat	1
			Thorsmark	In Wooden Shoe Land	1
			Van Stockum	Day on Skates	4
			Wade	Our Little Japanese Cousins	1
			Wahler and Hahn	Neighbors Here and Far	1
			Wells	Beppo the Donkey	1
			Wells	Coco the Goat	1
			Wiese	Chinese Inkstick	3
			Wiese	Laing and Lo	3
			Whitefield	Silver Wings	1
			Washburne	Letters to Channy	1
			Wood	Great Sweeping Day	2

# A Library Catalogue Lesson\*

GRACE L. ALDRICH

*Librarian, Horace Mann School, Teachers College, Columbia University*

WHERE IN school life is it advisable to teach a pupil to use a library catalogue? At what level does he take this instruction most willingly and at what level is he most inclined to make this ability a functioning part of his academic equipment?

The experience in the Horace Mann School seems to prove that as soon as the pupils have mastered the first skills in the use of the dictionary, they are ready. Not only ready but eager.

We used to give "library lessons." A class period—a full period, in junior or senior high school was given up to the librarian who gave a long talk on how to use a catalogue. In many cases she approached the matter, not from the point of view of one who *needed to use* the catalogue but from the point of view of the maker of a catalogue, which is to say from the other side of the fence. A librarian lately graduated from library school was inclined to fill her allotted hour with a repetition, with much bibliographic detail, of the lessons which she had just had in library school. Pupils took notes on the talk and filed them in their note books and that was that. They were more inclined to consider this talk as a note book filler than as an introduction to a practical skill. They continued to approach the catalogue with distaste or they refused to approach it at all, depending upon luck or on classmates or assistants to obtain their material.

At the Horace Mann School we have tried to feel our way into this situation from the pupil's point of view. As a re-

sult we are breaking up our library lessons into very small units. We are giving bits of experience which fit together later to form a larger experience as the bits of a mosaic fit together to form a pattern. We never give a full period lesson now *unless* the pupil's own questions and discussion demand it. Our first experience with the use of the catalogue comes in the fourth grade as a tie-up of several experiences given in preparation by both the teacher in the classroom, and the librarian in the library, and many times repeated. This is what happens.

Early in fourth grade, in preparation for the lessons in the use of the dictionary, the teacher, sometimes the librarian, tests pupils on the *functional use* of the alphabet. "What letter comes before H?" is asked of a pupil. "What is the second letter after M?" "What comes after J?" It works out as something of a game, to see who is quickest on response. This drill is necessary for it will be found that even in high school the greatest snag in the use of the catalogue is in the use of the alphabet.

At the same time the fourth grade, as do all grades in Horace Mann, comes once a week to the library for a "browsing period." This is a time when each pupil is free to search along the shelves for books that interest him, and to read whatever he chooses. No report is required of him, there is no compulsion, no check-up. He is to enjoy himself in the company of books. If he is restless or uninterested, a book of riddles, or one on ships, or on his particular hobby, just handed to him will often catch his attention and start his "plunge into a book's profound." During these periods the librarian calls at-

\* This is part of a study which is being made, to place at grade levels the various skills which are needed in library work. It is the result of a long time analysis of the elementary school child's need and use of the catalogue.

tention again and again, *when asked for titles*, to the difference between "numbered books" and "lettered books" (later she uses these terms interchangeably with "fiction" and "non-fiction"). Time is sometimes spent noticing that "fact" books are here and "stories" are here; and later that fact books have numbers on their backs, and stories have letters. These items are learned, not in lessons, but from casual conversations.

To one who does not see this program at long range these browsing periods appear formless. They are not when it is understood that both teacher and librarian have very definite objectives. The fore-knowledge of the location in the library of fiction and non-fiction is only one. This fore-knowledge means that the pupil has no hesitation in locating the book in the room once he has read his catalogue card.

Then comes the day in the classroom when pupils learn to use their dictionaries. After a little practice in such use the teacher suggests to the group that they ask the librarian to come to the room to see how well they find words. That is the librarian's cue. She goes to the classroom armed with one drawer from the catalogue. She watches them use their dictionaries and compliments them on their speed. Then she asks if they are going to be able to use that "power" (and the word is purposely used) which they have gained, anywhere else. Usually they know of the telephone book, and sometimes a child knows of the city directory. She holds up the drawer from the catalogue and says—"This is part of a different dictionary." They recognize it as having come from the catalogue case in the library (another bit of learning from the browsing period), but they are somewhat incredulous about its being a dictionary. Usually this first introduction is only a few minutes long and stresses only the fact that both are dictionaries because both follow the alphabet in form. One

lists words alphabetically and the other books. Before she leaves the class she tells them that when they are very skillful with their dictionaries she will come again and show them how to find books. The next browsing period finds many of them investigating the catalogue on their own initiative. But since the browsing period is a free period she neither interferes nor helps them. This is more experience and they are getting it for themselves.

When the teacher feels that they are doing well with their dictionaries (usually about mid-year) she again calls the librarian who this time takes to the classroom large cards, replicas of catalogue cards for title, author and subject. Note that order, for we believe it is important. The librarian begins with a fiction title because it is simplest and pupils seldom know more than the title of a book. She explains how the card is telling them that this is a lettered or fiction book. They know at once that fiction is "under the clock" in our library. This is one bit of learning that is a recall from browsing periods and does not have to be taken up in the lesson as it otherwise would have to be. When they can tell approximately where a book would be from flash cards she says, "You liked the last book and you wish another by the same person. Can you find it?" The class discusses the possibility of finding one. A flash card shows that it is still among the fiction books. Then she says—"But this same author has written 'fact books' also" and shows a non-fiction flash card. The class discusses the approximate location of this one as being (in our library) under the windows, and its relative position—near the beginning or near the end of the numbered books.

Then she says, "Now here's a puzzle! You are looking for a book of games and you know neither the title nor who wrote one. Do you suppose it can be found?"



They usually decide that the librarian can find one. And if she can, perhaps they can. So she comes to subject cards. Pupils almost always ask if this will work in any library.

She ties up this talk and the other bits of experience by suggesting that they do a "rainbow test," not for marks, but so they may find out how much "power" they have. This test may be done on their own time, or in another browsing period, but the test consists in actually finding on the shelf one book by title, one by author, and one by subject, using the catalogue to do so. It is called a rainbow test because, for the librarian's own convenience in checking, title questions have been made on pink slips, author on blue and subject on yellow. But the children like both the name and the colors. To take the test, pupils come to the librarian for a pink slip. At the same time they make out a white record slip with name, room number, and a number for each question. These they understand are "work sheets," to be used for noting the call numbers. They are also the final record of their work.

The pupil goes to the catalogue with his slip, finds out whether the book is fiction or non-fiction, and goes to the place on the shelves where the book should be. Whether the book is there or in circulation is immaterial since he has found its location. He stands by that place until the librarian marks the number on his record which corresponds to the color of his slip. Teacher and librarian let pupils labor with the catalogue and help each other. They confine themselves to checking accomplishment. When a pupil has all three numbers checked he turns the record-slip in to his teacher, who holds these records until each has completed the test.

In this way we get a performance test from each pupil. And they love it! We keep slips ready and some pupils do six

tests a day. They get to be something of a nuisance until we set them to making slips for each other. Of course this is all to the good, for it gives splendid practice. Usually it is not necessary to teach much more on the use of the catalogue because each individual asks questions when he comes upon some new need.

When pupils get this experience and practice this early, they have no fear of, nor aversion to, using the catalogue, and they seem to take all the rest of what we once tried to teach them in their stride, saving much time for themselves and for us.

To the visitor the short library lesson seems slight and casual. What he does not see is that in previous periods, which may themselves have seemed formless, four separate bits or mosaics of experience have been provided not once only but repeatedly and at times in advance of their actual need. It is impossible to say how much of this experience is given by the teacher and how much by the librarian.

The dictionary seems the logical point of departure for the use of the catalogue. The feeling of power engendered in the pupil by his ability to exercise this skill in a wider field than the dictionary is very satisfying to him. This satisfaction makes him repeat the exercise until he has *given himself* the drill necessary for facile use. The use of the performance test, not for marks but as a guide to pupils' accomplishment, brings together all the bits of experience in a way which shows him his own growing ability.

We use the test not only in fourth grade but for diagnosing the needs of new pupils, for testing our own after vacation, for any slow worker, and to locate specific difficulties. Even seventh and eighth graders enjoy doing this test. We often regret that we ever started it, so popular it is!

The success of the test depends upon

the mechanics of handling it. Well in advance of the giving of the test the maker must consider how many pupils must be taken care of at one time as compared with the number of catalogue drawers there are. If there is a sizable class and only six drawers she must divide those drawers temporarily into sections putting them into suitable receptacles which will not tear or tip over and give each section a proper label. That means breaking up the drawer A-D into three boxes perhaps, one marked A-Be, one marked Be-Ca, and one marked Ca-D. Then she must herself take drawer A-Be and working *from it* (this is most important for smooth execution) put on to her colored slips three author, three title, and three subject entries, with no duplicates, three being the greatest number of pupils that can use a given catalogue unit successfully at one time. It may be more satisfactory to make lists and make the typed slips from them later, since typed slips cause less confusion than written ones, but if this is done they must be carefully checked for error before they are given to pupils. All possible care must be taken to avoid confusion since there will be some even with the best planning. Titles are always on the same color and carry title only. Author slips are also on one color only and carry author and title.

Occasionally an author card will read "How many books have we in this library that were written by A. P. Terhune? Find one." The subject slips, always on their own color usually read, "Find a book about *Games* that pleases you." Or "Which of our books on stars do you find most interesting?"

We give out all three slips at once so that a pupil is free to use the one of the three which is in the catalogue drawer least in demand at the moment. At the same time we give him a paper clip with which he keeps his four slips together until he has completed the test. Time is no element. Our object is not to see who can finish first, but who cannot do it and what his difficulties are. Those who have more than ordinary difficulty are helped by others on their first set, and then given a set to do all alone. There is nothing new or unusual about this lesson. But we are convinced by our results and the pupils' pleasure in the performance that immediately after the first acquisition of the dictionary skill is the proper place to give it. We also find ourselves so satisfied with the little pieces of lessons—"mosaics of pattern"—given as experiences before the need that we are breaking up all our library lessons into small parts instead of filling a period as we did before.

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# A Joke on the Imps\*

## A Book Week Pantomime

FLORENCE E. FOSTER

AND PUPIL COMMITTEE

Sussex School, Shaker Heights, Ohio

### CHARACTERS

GRANDPA IMP who wears a long red cloak, a tall pointed hat, and horn-rimmed glasses. He hobbles about with the aid of a cane.  
SIX NAUGHTY LITTLE IMPS who wear tight little black suits and bright colored pointed caps, scarfs, and tails.  
SIX CHILDREN who wear ordinary school clothes.

### SCENES

Scene 1: A dusty attic. Old boxes and stacks of books stand about. An old trunk is in the center of the stage. The light is dim and purple.  
Scene 2: A schoolroom. A large library table and chairs occupy the center of the stage.  
Scene 3: Same as Scene 1.

### INTRODUCTION

*(The reader reads the introduction before the curtain)*

READER: Once upon a time there were six mischievous little imps who lived up in an attic of an old house. They were always happy while they lived there among old, torn, musty books. Occasionally, however, they liked to get new books because it gave them a chance to destroy them. Grandpa Imp, the wickedest of all of them, lived with these naughty little ones. He furnished new ideas for the little imps to use in ruining books.

*(Curtains part slowly as Grandpa Imp hobbles in, motioning to left and right.)*

### SCENE I

READER: One day he called all his children together to give them a new plan.  
"Come, Dog-Ears; here, Back-Breaker; come Pencil-Marks and Scribbler; hurry, Sticky Fingers and Tearer. Sit down, all of you, and listen to my great and wonderful plan."

\* This pantomime was produced by a group of sixth grade pupils at the Sussex School, Shaker Heights, Ohio.

*(Grandpa Imp has seated himself upon an old trunk. The imps who run in from right and left entrances, sit down on piles of books or on the floor, three on each side of Grandpa in a kind of semicircle.)*

"I know a school called Sussex, where the children are very careful of their books. *(Imps shake their heads in disgust.)* Let us go there and show them some of OUR ways."

*(Imps nod their heads to each other. Some clap hands and some wave their tails to express their delight.)*

"Now my dear imps, show me just what you are going to do. Dog-Ears first."

*(Dog-Ears rises, stretches his arms up, brings them back suddenly, hugging them to his sides. After the performance of each imp, the rest all laugh and clap their hands noiselessly and nod their heads.)*

"Fine! Now Back-Breaker."

*(Back-Breaker rises, and falls suddenly on his face.)*

"Wonderful! Pencil-Marks and Scribbler, my imps, show me how you can perform."

*(Pencil-Marks and Scribbler jump up and make motions with their very large pencils.)*

"Yes, yes. Sticky-Fingers, what will you do?"

*(Sticky-Fingers, who has a very large stick of red and white candy in his right hand, puts it up to his mouth, transfers it to the left hand, and slowly licks the fingers of his right hand. Then he turns imaginary pages.)*

"Ah-h-h-h! And Tearer?"

*(Tearer stands and tears imaginary pages with great force.)*

"Excellent, my lad." *(Grandpa rises)*

"Now off you all go and do your best."

*(The imps skip and run off in different directions, waving their tails at Grandpa.)*

Curtain

## SCENE II

*(The children sit about a large library table reading. The imps appear one by one, each beckoning to the imp who follows. They come in very quietly and sit down stage facing up stage.)*

READER: One day the imps appeared in the Sussex sixth grade room during a reading period. In they crept, very softly, one by one. Dog-Ears decided to try his luck first. He went up to Adelaide and said, "What is this I see? A book-mark? Impossible! It is much easier to turn down a page like this."

*(He leans over Adelaide's shoulder, seizes the book-mark, throws it to the floor, and tries to turn down a page. Adelaide pushes him away.)*

"Why this is a new book-mark and besides, you should never do that to any book! Get away from me!"

Dog-Ears ran shrieking to a corner.

Back-Breaker approached Jim, who was just going to ask Billy a question.

*(Jim has used a book-mark and closed his book. He goes around the table to ask Billy a question. Back-Breaker sneaks up to his book, removes the marker, and turns the book face down. Jim returns to his place.)*

"Leave your book this way when you want to lay it down!"

"I should say not," answered Jim. "I close my book and use a book-mark."

Away ran Back-Breaker to drown his sorrows under the table.

Pencil-Marks and Scribbler tried to persuade Jean and Margaret to draw pictures in their books but the girls would have nothing to do with the imps.

*(The two imps try to reach over the girls' shoulders to write in the books, but they are pushed away.)*

Sticky-Fingers, eating some candy, ran to Billy to try to show him how to read a book and eat candy at the same time.

*(He does just what he showed*

*Grandpa Imp. The imps all cry as he returns to his place.)*

"Not on your life!" shouted Billy, and Sticky-Fingers had to give up. Next it was Tearer's turn and all the imps hoped he would succeed. In his best manners he attempted to make Nancy tear some pages out of her book, but Nancy would not.

*(All the imps cry and Tearer beckons to them to leave. All trudge off slowly with bowed heads and they wipe their eyes with huge handkerchiefs.)*

Six naughty little, sad little imps moved slowly out of the room.

Curtain

## SCENE III

*(Same as first. Grandpa Imp is seated on his trunk as the curtains open. The imps appear slowly and seat themselves as in the first scene.)*

READER: "Well, my children, you look very sad indeed. Have you not succeeded in your expedition?"

Scribbler and Pencil-Marks replied, "Oh, the children wouldn't use any pencils at all while they were reading."

Then Sticky-Fingers arose and said, "Alas, they wouldn't eat any delicious sticky candy while they were reading either."

"Those Sussex children insisted upon using book-marks instead of my simple method of turning down a page," remarked Dog-Ears.

"And do you think they would put a book down on its face without closing it? Not at all! They would close it every time," grumbled Back-Breaker.

Tearer said in a complaining voice, "They never would tear a page out of a book."

"Alas, alack, and oh dear," sighed Grandpa Imp, "what shall we do? You could not get even one of those children to follow your excellent examples. Now you will have to stay in your dusty attic and be content with your own old books. But, my imps, as you are working with your beloved torn books, perhaps you may discover new methods of destruction that will appeal to those children. Although I must say, just now I am as discouraged as you are."

*(The imps and Grandpa wipe their eyes as the curtains close slowly.)*



# Along the Magic Highway

JOHN COLE

*The Hobby Horse Book Shop, Carson Pirie Scott and Company  
Chicago, Illinois*

**I** LIKE this year's theme for Children's Book Week because it has a real touch of imagination and it covers so completely the whole book field. "Reading—the Magic Highway to Adventure" means to me not only the adventure that one finds by following Kim through India or being with Jim Hawkins in the apple barrel when Long John Silver unfolds his nefarious scheme, or holding the mountain pass with Roland, or jumping down the rabbit-hole with Alice, but it also means to me the adventure that you, yourself have when with the aid of books you discover the magic of poetry, the thrill that comes from discovery of the world of the stars through the eyes of great astronomers like Frost or Reed, and the astonishing adventures that biography can bring.

As one of the purposes of Children's Book Week is to create an interest in the purchase of more books for the home, it might be interesting to hear of a plan that we of the Hobby Horse Book Shop spent many months perfecting—"The Foundation Library for Girls and Boys." It happened in the spring of last year that the *Publisher's Weekly* mentioned something of a book plan that was being used out in Oregon. Being interested in anything that might be helpful in making the shop of greater value to children we investigated the plan, and found that it was a very good one, but that it lacked two things. One was the fact that the ages were not specific enough, for we had discovered that though everyone knows that the age range of any particular book varies with different children, it is a very confusing thing to mothers and fathers and



From *Blue Nets and Red Sails*. By Helen Bradley Preston. Illus. by Margaret Temple Braley. Courtesy Longmans, Green.

uncles and aunts when they select books. And secondly, there was no arrangement for a budget purchase plan. Again we had found that a great many parents were depriving their children of good books because they could not afford to pay as much as two dollars in any one month. For months we worked on our lists, using to help us *Realms of Gold*, our own bookshop records, Anne Carroll Moore's *Seven Stories High*, *Children's Reading*, the American Library Association Lists and a wide variety of school lists. Finally, when we were literally bleary eyed, the list was

done. We had lived so closely with the list that by that time we were not at all sure that we had made one that would stand inspection, so we took it to a member of the American Library Association for her critical opinion. I really don't know what we would have done if she hadn't in the main approved of our selection. But fortunately, with but a few very fine suggestions, the list came back intact. One reason I think it is a good list is that we always kept in mind the one important question, "Is it a book that children love?" If a book couldn't stand up under that question, it was dropped, no matter what other fine qualities it might have. The list starts with the one-year-olds and goes through to the 'teens. The Hobby Horse Book Shop will be very glad to send anyone interested a copy of *The Foundation Library Plan for Girls and Boys*.

It is an unfortunate thing that the Hobby Horse Book Shop is located in the very heart of Chicago's Loop, for it makes it rather inaccessible to the children themselves. Perhaps because of this very fact the advent into the shop of a boy or girl is more memorable and stays with greater clarity in our minds. Some of the things that we learn from our young visitors are to respect their critical judgement, to remember that they can be both older and younger than their age at the same time, that black and white as well as colored illustrations interest them, that girls are even more fond than boys of horse and dog stories, that boys and girls of seventh and eighth grades are reading a surprising amount of adult material, and that much earlier than we perhaps realize is permanent good or bad taste in literature being formed.

One day the shop was visited by a delegation from the graduating class of one of the elementary schools. They had decided that their graduation gift was going to be books for the school library and they had about thirty dollars to spend. There

were five girls and one boy on the committee and they had decided to spread the purchase throughout the whole school so that all the children could be included. With no other guidance than their own good sense, this is the list of books that make up their graduation gift: *Just So Stories*, *When We Were Very Young*, *Story of Mrs. Tubbs*, *Poppy Seed Cakes*, *Wonderful Locomotive*, *Sung Under the Silver Umbrella*, *Mr. McTavish*, *Reindeer of the Waves*, *Understood Betsy*, *Book of Indians*, *Children of the Handcrafts*, *Treasure Seekers*, *Traveling With the Birds*, *Wind in the Willows*, *Young Walter Scott*, *Good Master*, *Invincible Louisa*, *A Child's History of Art*, *Earth for Sam*, *Stars for Sam*, are ones that I remember. Nothing wrong with the judgment of those young people I would say!

Another time there literally bounced into the shop a curly headed mite that might have been seven, and like a humming bird she darted among the books, stopping whenever she found one that she liked or thought she might like. "Oh, there is *Mary Poppins*!" By the eager delighted way she picked it up one knew at once what an impression the book had made, and wasn't she happy when she learned that *Mary Poppins Returns* was waiting to be taken home! You can be sure that a few moments later, when mother arrived, the book was purchased, and out of the shop bounced a happy, satisfied, little girl.

Last summer a lad of twelve dropped into the shop and asked what we had on paleontology. The few books that we had in stock like *The Earth for Sam* and *Earth and Sky* he already had. During our visit we learned that he had come from California and was on his way back, so we did the next best thing and searched through the catalogues and sent him off with a list of books and the directions to the Field Museum. He reminded me of the boy whose desire for books on prehis-

toric animals wasn't completely satisfied until he had literally devoured *Before the Dawn of History*, *Beasts of the Tar Pits*, *Earth for Sam*, and *The Book of Prehistoric Animals*. Their intellectual curiosity is one of the most encouraging things I know about young people today.

Professor Cizec, the famous Austrian teacher of art, allows his young students to follow their natural bents, and so in one class you will find one child doing wood blocks, another modeling in clay, another sketching with her pencil, and still another splashing on paint. I am struck with the contrast between Professor Cizec's method and the way I was taught art when I was in school. Everyone had to paint the orange, and every one had to do the snow scene. Because we all had to do everything together, we were most of us bored to death with art. Reading was very much the same way, and if I am not terribly mistaken, the curriculum method still holds true today. Is it necessary? Some schools I know, realizing the fact that the class room monotony spoils pleasure in reading, have inaugurated free reading periods with surprising results. But wouldn't it be possible to have as much variety in the English class room as Professor Cizec has in his art class room?

This year in Chicago there will be held a special meeting of the Progressive Education Association in memory of Francis W. Parker, and the Hobby Horse Book Shop hopes that many teachers who will be in Chicago at that time will not only visit the booth that we will have at the conference, but will also make a special effort to run in and see the shop itself. Probably there has been no greater force in creating a new day in education than Francis W. Parker, and the Hobby Horse Book Shop is happy to have a part in the celebration to be held in his honor. He gave education wings with which to soar into new and freer ways; he held that the child should not be hampered by a too

rigid and too hide-bound curriculum. Some of the things which today we accept as fundamental principles in education he fought for years ago in the public schools of Chicago. The Hobby Horse Book Shop feels that it was very fortunate to have as advisor and counselor during its first few years, two women who were greatly influenced by Col. Parker's ideals—Miss Elsie Wygant and Mrs. Ruth H. Harshaw. They supplied a spark of genius that is reflected in so many of the things that we have tried to accomplish in our work with schools and parents. Just as an example, it was Miss Wygant who organized the Saturday morning lectures that we have given for the last two years on children's reading, and which have been enthusiastically attended by a large number of teachers. Miss Wygant and Mrs. Harshaw took charge of most of the lectures, but we were fortunate in having several guest lecturers including May Massee, children's editor of the Viking Press, and John Merrill of the Francis W. Parker School. Since each lecture touched on some special phase of children's books, we always had an exhibit pertinent to the lecture and after the lecture there would be informal discussions about the books exhibited. This seemed helpful because the very concentrated nature of the exhibit made it even more valuable than visiting the shop where the books might be widely separated. An interesting thing happened last year in that through special arrangement with the National College of Education we were able to give regular credit to teachers who wanted it. For these teachers a class was held an hour before the lectures.

Ruth H. Harshaw, director of children's activities at Carson's, has been a tower of strength. It is her enthusiasm and knowledge of children's books that has made the shop take such rapid strides forward. Not many book shops are lucky

enough to be able to command the cooperation of so vital a personality, one who has written books for children, has taught children, who has four children of her own, and who can make a talk on children's books as exciting as a play. In the course of a year Mrs. Harshaw will make fifty or sixty talks to groups of interested mothers in many parts of the city and suburbs. She approaches the subject from unusual angles but she always brings out, the parents' responsibility in the matter of right books for children. "Why the literary background of children cannot be left to Santa Claus, and what we may do about it," is the subject of one of her most popular lectures. You can see that here is no stereotyped lecture, but one to make mothers sit up and take notice and the best part of it is, they do. Mrs. Harshaw is also editor of the *Hobby Horse Review* which comes out every month and gives news about books for children. The Hobby Horse Book Shop is also rightfully proud of Mrs. Harshaw as author of *Council of the Gods* and *Reindeer of the Waves*. The first is a book that tells a unified story of the Greek gods which gives the reader a clear picture of the relationship of the gods to each other. There isn't another book that I know that does just that thing. In *Reindeer of the Waves* we have a Viking story that is as simply written as a saga but that tells of the home life of a Viking child, and makes that side of the Viking civilization real and exciting.

Due to lack of funds for books in the school budget, there have sprung up some very interesting projects to supply this lack. In one school in particular, the seventh and eighth grades formed a book club, and under the guidance of a most interesting teacher they have built up a library of around five hundred books.

Each member pays dues of twenty-five cents a semester, and then when a new batch of books comes into the library he can reserve one for five cents, thus making additional money available for books. The books are particularly well selected, and the natural craving for good books of mystery and adventure is satisfied; it is quite surprising how a very tolerant attitude about reading can produce eager readers. Some of the children have to be led along by slow stages and when they find that there are books outside of series that are every bit as interesting, it doesn't take so very long to bring their standards of reading up to the best in the class. We must avoid the temptation to be superior about books if we would gain the confidence of young people, for there is nothing that they resent more than having some particular favorite of theirs made light of. Nothing is so catching as enthusiasm, so be enthusiastic about the books you want them to read and it shouldn't be difficult to get them to share your enthusiasm.

Children's Book Week is so much fun and one can only hope that some of the gay carefree feeling that we have about books during that time can be carried over into all the rest of the year. What could our schools do that would be of more lasting benefit for this great country of ours than to make the love of reading and books so general that it will carry over into life after school a desire to read and to build libraries in one's own home! More and better books for every home should be the gay shout to be heard from every hamlet, town, and city during Children's Book Week. Let us try to make "Reading—the Magic Highway to Adventure" available to all the children and perhaps we shall have a finer and more livable world.



# Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition\*

HARRY A. GREENE

*Professor of Education  
University of Iowa*

(Continued from May)

## **E. Frequency of use of language skills in life situations affords an objective index to their social importance.**

The acceptance of the social-utility theory of the curriculum implies that the school shall provide the child with controls over the most important social situations which he must meet as a child and as an adult (85, 86, 121, 122, 132, 146). Importance is defined generally in terms of frequency of occurrence and in terms of cruciality or great social significance even though the frequency may be low. Thus, the fact that letter-writing is one of the most vital forms of written expression makes it important in the English curriculum, even though there are many specific oral language usages which in terms of sheer frequency would pile up much higher.

The importance of this principle appears in the effect which it must necessarily have on the relative instructional emphasis given to skills in English. Its general acceptance and application in the teaching of English would mean much greater emphasis on the socially important oral language abilities, and a great deal more on such written language abilities as letter writing.

## **F. Frequency of usage alone is not an adequate criterion of social importance.**

The application of the social utility principle to the language curriculum implies that instructional emphasis should

be measured in terms of the relative social importance of the language usage. That is to say, the more frequently a skill is utilized in language expression, the more important it is that it receive adequate instructional emphasis. However, frequency alone is not enough. The importance of a skill must also be measured in terms of its cruciality and its difficulty.

In general there is no very adequate objective measure of cruciality. Leonard's (100) survey of the reactions of people to the relative undesirability of certain incorrect usages is one type of attack on the problem. The error quotient also affords a possible indirect measure of this factor. This device, first suggested by Stormzand, is an attempt to show the relationship between actual number of errors made in a usage and the number of opportunities for error. Studies of frequency of error (34, 159) have tended to put too great an emphasis on the recurrence of a usage. In many cases this has meant that simple and elemental skills, which bear a very large share of the social burden in usage but have relatively little innate difficulty, receive an undue amount of instruction emphasis. The error quotient is an attempt to compensate for this tendency (105, 139).

## **G. Cross-sections of adult mastery and usage taken alone afford an inadequate criterion of English usage.**

Two definite points of view for the establishment of levels of language usage

have been proposed. The first assumes that a cross-section of common social usage is an adequate criterion for deciding all debatable language issues. This proceeds on the theory that adult mastery in the language field is itself adequate. Leonard's *Current English Usage* (100) published by the National Council of Teachers of English is an illustration of this point of view. Such a procedure may reveal the direction language usages are taking in response to social pressure, yet the effect is somewhat disconcerting to the average teacher (61). It is believed that the uncritical application of the social utility point of view to the development of the language curriculum will result in lowering the general plane of language usage. Most adults have a totally inadequate notion of what constitutes correct usage. Accordingly a cross-section of such usage might result in a serious lowering of the standards. While it is certain that English must be in a continuous state of adjustment to the demands of good social usage, it is also true that there must be certain leavening forces tending to prevent the too-rapid decline of these usages below the level of social acceptability. To many it seems that some type of objective standards of usage must be established, and that these standards must represent relatively high levels of control for the purpose of stimulating better and more effective expression, if not for the general elevation of the usage-level itself.

**H. Desirable standards of practice on controversial issues in the mechanics of written expression are revealed in the overlapping of style manuals.**

The point of view emphasized here concerns the need for establishing ultimate standards of acceptable practice on

certain controversial issues based upon the usages followed by individuals whose business and professional activities continually demand the use of the practices involved. For example, it has been proposed (119) that for guidance in the determination of the specific capitalization and punctuation skills which should constitute the desirable ultimate goals, reliance be placed in the judgment and practices of editors and editorial departments of the large publishing houses. The authors of text books in English appear to be far from agreement among themselves with respect to these practices. If the editorial departments of great publishing houses do not know which of several conflicting practices is desirable it is doubtful if any one does. An attack on this problem, begun by making an item by item check of the handbooks or manuals of style followed by twenty-five of the larger publishing houses, reveals the general categories of skills which are of major importance in terms of frequency of mention in the handbooks. Practices which appear with high frequency doubtless represent material of distinct social and instructional utility. As a source of material to be taken over bodily into the curriculum, such a criterion obviously represents far too high a standard but in spite of this it is highly suggestive and valuable in settling controversial issues in this field (59).

**I. Letter writing involves more types of language skills than does any other form of written expression.**

Letter writing not only takes its place at the head of the list of socially important forms of written language expression but it calls into play a larger group of language skills than does any other form of written expression (105, 62). Thus, letter writing is socially important for instruc-

tional purposes, and the product, per unit of material, affords a most valuable source of information on the social burden actually carried by many of the written language skills. Supervisors and curriculum workers will secure highly useful information on matters of form, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, vocabulary richness and growth, sentence structure and paragraph structure through the critical analysis of all types of letters (62).

**J. The social importance of letter writing should place it high in instructional emphasis in the elementary school.**

It is estimated that the average adult expresses himself orally 95 per cent of the time, and in written form approximately five per cent (5). It is not known exactly what proportion of written language expression is represented by letter writing but undoubtedly a large percentage of the written expression of the average adult is accounted for in that way. A practical recognition of the importance of this statement would produce a marked shift in the instructional emphasis on language in the elementary school. Teachers in the elementary school will find in letter writing a high concentration of skills dealing with form, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraph as well as sentence structure (62). Accordingly, it should come in for heavy emphasis in elementary school language instruction.

**K. Instructional emphasis should be given to language situations in proportion to the social burden they carry in expression.**

The evidence on this point is somewhat theoretical, yet it seems obvious enough to conclude that a given amount

of instructional effort can be made more effective if distributed over the skills which carry the greatest burden. Letter writing being important among the written language abilities should be emphasized in instruction in proportion to its importance. Similarly the great social importance of oral expression carries with it the responsibility for greater instructional emphasis.

**L. The fact that the written and oral expression of the same individuals on the same subject are different in vocabulary and in structure should be recognized in instruction.**

Observation of pupils at work in the language class reveals differences in the relative fluency of oral and written production. Lower grade children, handicapped apparently by the mechanics of writing, spelling, and form, will write brief and incomplete treatments of topics on which they will talk at length. Significant differences are also found in the types of sentences used and in the vocabularies employed. Studies by Betts (11), Gregerson (69), Jakeman (94), and White (156) show that when children are asked to write and to speak on the same topics they use almost twice as many running words in their oral composition as in their written productions. They also use numerous words in their written expressions which do not appear at all in the oral compositions. The reverse is also true. Jakeman (94) found over seven hundred words which were used only in the oral compositions produced by his subjects and over three hundred and fifty words used only in their written productions. In general, these words were of low frequency, but the oral list contained many contractions which should be watched carefully in oral compositions.

**M. The following specific factors should be considered in the grade placement of course of study content in elementary English composition.**

1. *The frequency and cruciality of the specific skills in the language activities of adults.*

The social utility point of view in the selection of curricular content assumes that one of the purposes of education is to prepare the child to meet life as an adult. Therefore his training for this must be along the lines of the activities in which he as an adult will be called upon to participate (100, 127, 159). Thus as a child he learns to write letters which as an adult he will be expected to produce. He learns to spell the words which he as an adult is most likely to wish to use in his writing (86). The more extensive the social demands on the particular skill appear to be, the more important it is that early and effective instruction be given.

2. *The frequency and cruciality of the specific skills in the language demands made on children both in and out of school*

The social utility point of view in education seems to imply a dual responsibility here. The course of study must meet the language needs of the child in connection with his school and out-of-school activities as well as prepare him to meet those types of situations he is likely to encounter as an adult. In language the ability to fill in simple forms such as are required in school, to answer the telephone properly, to carry on a simple conversation, to meet certain social situations easily and without embarrassment, to write an informal note, all have great present as well as ultimate values, and accordingly, are taught early in the primary grades (132).

3. *The readiness of the pupils to make use of the specific language skills.*

Skills which children themselves attempt to use in their own free expression should normally receive emphasis at that time unless there is evidence that the skills present undue learning difficulty. The investigations of Bontrager (16), Cesander (32), Cockrill (36), Hamilton (75), and the large project now under way in the Iowa Language Laboratory (62) offer enlightening evidence on the child's own attempts to make use of the various skills.

4. *The relation of skills to each other in terms of facilitation and interference.*

Little or no evidence is available concerning the supplementation and interferences resulting from the presentation of the language skills in different sequences. O'Rourke's (112) data afford a most useful basis for inference here. There is probably an optimum sequence for the presentation of language abilities so that skills acquired later may strengthen rather than interfere with previous learning. Ultimately experimental procedures may reveal this order.

5. *The number of different skills which it is psychologically desirable to present to the pupil at any one grade level.*

Almost nothing except the most subjective evidence is available on this point. Some indirect evidence from studies by Diebel and Sears (42), Gettys (56), Kennedy (96), Sunne (140), and Potter and Touton (117) shows that errors persist from grade to grade. O'Rourke (112) shows a persistent lack of mastery of certain skills as organized and as taught in this experiment. The implication from the evidence is that current practice undoubtedly presents too many different types of skills to the pupil in a given



grade with too little opportunity for maintenance drills.

6. *The innate learning difficulty of the skills.*

Evidence appears to be almost completely lacking on the problem of the actual learning difficulty of specific language skills. The best that is available is relatively crude data on persistence of errors (42, 117, 140). Kennedy (96) in a study of verb usages showed that many common verbs revealed wide difference in apparent difficulty of mastery as shown by persistence of errors from grade to grade. In this study the operation of interferences in learning was evident. Gettys (56) found similar results in a study of persistence of errors in certain punctuation usages.

### III. PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING IN ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

In this section are grouped those principles of method in the teaching of elementary school English composition which are based directly upon research in the learning of language or are inferred from research in learning in related subjects.

#### A. Mastery of language skills cannot be left to incidental teaching.

The fact that the development of skill in English composition is so dependent upon the subject matter of other fields has encouraged the assumption that the mastery of specific language skills may be safely left to incidental teaching. Recent evidence obtained from many quarters indicates quite clearly that highly effective teaching of English composition abilities may be done under classroom conditions in which the child learner is not especially aware of the fact that he is learning English (57). Undoubtedly such close correlation of English with pupil needs in

other subject matter is desirable and effective (88). However, no matter how unconscious the child may be of the emphasis on language skills, it should not be assumed that the instructor himself loses sight of this emphasis.

It is believed that the best evidence indicates that no program of instruction in English composition can be effectively developed on an incidental basis. Every specific skill must be taught, reviewed and drilled systematically in order to attain and maintain adequate mastery (57). This means that an effective language program must provide definite language periods where fundamental skills can be presented clearly and fixed firmly by means of drill (111, 143, 161). These are teaching periods, not testing periods. The materials themselves remind the teacher that there are certain instructional tasks to be attended to; tasks made evident in certain language needs which have been revealed in other activities. In the fields of spelling, reading, and arithmetic, where more research has been carried on in this problem of incidental teaching, this principle is quite clearly established. Without direct teaching in the development of the expressional skills, they cannot be expected to be much better than mediocre.

#### B. Correct usage is largely a matter of habit.

The most acceptable psychology of learning at the present time indicates that correct habits are developed through the exercise of the desired responses (52). Careless language habits, the same as erroneous information in other fields, present a two-fold language problem, first, the eradication of the fault, and second, the substitution of the correct reaction (53). Control over the correct response must be carried to a point far beyond immediate mastery if it is to persist (53).

Generalizations and rules may help to secure a more rational basis of control but the final measure of mastery lies in the correct habituation of the skill. Children brought up under home environments in which careless usages are permitted find much difficulty in correcting these habits formed early in life. A veneer of grammar may help to cover this defect, but in times of stress it readily sloughs off leaving the individual to face the situation with only his earlier habits to guide him (26).

**C. Correct language habits are developed in accordance with the general laws of learning.**

Learning to express oneself correctly is no exception to the basic laws of learning. In general, the more often a reaction is made to a situation the easier the response becomes (145). Pleasant stimulation and pleasing results promote the learning process (53). Correct language usage habits are produced through frequent and continuous repetition of the desired reactions (143). Accordingly, the effective learning situation in language is one in which the individual is able repeatedly to produce the expected response under pleasantly motivated conditions. Thus it is that drill exercises prepared from the individual's own creative efforts provide the most effective means of improving his habits of oral or written expression. His attention is called to his own personal errors. An unpleasant reaction to the error is created by the fact that it is not socially acceptable (161). Emphasis on the specific error situations found in his creative efforts gives him frequent opportunity for the correct reactions.

**D. Habits of correct usage are more effective than rules for usage.**

The evidence on this principle is derived by both a positive and a negative

approach. Experimental studies demonstrating the efficiency of carefully administered drill in the development of desirable language habits and the evident transfer of these habits to the individual's language expression afford the basis for the positive approach (143). The negative basis for the statement lies in the fact that the functional and disciplinary values of formal grammar are not only difficult to reveal through research but apparently there is little or no evidence of transfer of these values to increased expressional ability. Hoyt's (90) study in 1906 indicated that "there is about the same relationship existing between grammar and composition and grammar and interpretation, as exists between any two totally different subjects, as grammar and geography." More recent studies (2, 23, 27, 113, 129) indicate that there is little reason to believe that formal grammar reveals itself in any significant way in the pupil's increased ability to express himself. Furthermore, the most recent studies (27, 113) show quite clearly that there is only the slightest relationship between the knowledge of the specific rules and the control over the situations covered by the rules. This is true in the case of mechanical skills such as punctuation and capitalization and in the more subtle areas of usage.

**E. Directed drill on specific skills should follow attempted use of the skills in activity situations.**

Indirect evidence implied from other experiments in learning indicates that improvement in the control of language skills is most likely to result when the drill itself is motivated by the child's unsuccessful attempt to use the skill in his own language expression. This means that effective drill materials will be constructed from materials produced by the children themselves (115). Not only is

the motivation much more effective but there is greater assurance that the individual needs of the pupils are met by such material.

**F. Transfer of expressional skills to fields outside the English classroom follows the usual laws of transfer.**

The experimental evidence on transfer of training indicates that transfer takes place from one field of activity to another on those elements of the two activities which are common to both (145). Furthermore, it has been noted that transfer is facilitated when special stress is placed upon the methods of mastering these common elements (53). Transfer of abilities developed in English classrooms may be expected to show up in other classrooms only to the extent that the desired reactions are perfectly habituated, the similar elements are identified, and special stress is placed upon these common elements (131). The special significance of this principle seems to lie in the necessity which it points out for persistent emphasis on correct language usage in all subject-matter fields and in all classroom situations. It is another way of saying that all instruction in English cannot be confined to the English class.

**G. A definite language consciousness should be developed.**

This principle depends largely upon implied rather than experimental data. It assumes that the establishment of a background of good language habits in itself gives the child an attitude toward error in language and that this attitude toward language error is a protection against the recurrence of careless usage (97). Fundamentally this goes back to the basic laws of learning. Language skills arise, as do other specific skills, through the proper

exercise of the desired habits. This implies the proper identification of the skills to be exercised, and the construction of valid instructional and drill materials to fix them as habits. This material serves two major purposes. First, it insures that the pupil will have extensive experience in making the correct responses to selected language situations. In the second place, the use of such material ultimately sets up in the pupil's mind an attitude toward language error. It seems logical to conclude that only when a person is made sensitive to a language error does he watch it carefully enough to prevent its recurrence.

The possible danger should be pointed out that too much emphasis on this language consciousness may make an individual over-sensitive to the point of becoming self-conscious in his use of language.

**H. Economy in the development of language skills results from emphasis on those usages which bear the major social burden.**

Logic rather than evidence is the basis for this principle. The discovery by Ayres (4) that relatively few words do most of the work in written expression greatly simplified the problem of teaching spelling. The efforts of Charters and Miller (34), and Wilson (159) were directed toward the discovery of the most frequent sources of difficulty in language expression. While these results may have tended to over-emphasize the corrective aspects of English, they were attempts at economy in language mastery through focusing attention on a few very important usages.

A comprehensive attempt to discover the precise variants of certain mechanical skills in written expression is now under way in the University of Iowa language laboratory (62). This investigation is based upon two previous studies of the

Generalizations and rules may help to secure a more rational basis of control but the final measure of mastery lies in the correct habituation of the skill. Children brought up under home environments in which careless usages are permitted find much difficulty in correcting these habits formed early in life. A veneer of grammar may help to cover this defect, but in times of stress it readily sloughs off leaving the individual to face the situation with only his earlier habits to guide him (26).

**C. Correct language habits are developed in accordance with the general laws of learning.**

Learning to express oneself correctly is no exception to the basic laws of learning. In general, the more often a reaction is made to a situation the easier the response becomes (145). Pleasant stimulation and pleasing results promote the learning process (53). Correct language usage habits are produced through frequent and continuous repetition of the desired reactions (143). Accordingly, the effective learning situation in language is one in which the individual is able repeatedly to produce the expected response under pleasantly motivated conditions. Thus it is that drill exercises prepared from the individual's own creative efforts provide the most effective means of improving his habits of oral or written expression. His attention is called to his own personal errors. An unpleasant reaction to the error is created by the fact that it is not socially acceptable (161). Emphasis on the specific error situations found in his creative efforts gives him frequent opportunity for the correct reactions.

**D. Habits of correct usage are more effective than rules for usage.**

The evidence on this principle is derived by both a positive and a negative

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A comprehensive attempt to discover the precise variants of certain mechanical skills in written expression is now under way in the University of Iowa language laboratory (62). This investigation is based upon two previous studies of the

problems of punctuation. Bontrager (16) analyzed the punctuation rules presented in Greene's (59) summary of style manuals in such a way as to identify each possible variation of a punctuation usage. While several different punctuation situations may be represented by a single rule, the actual learning situation may be quite complex. For example, one of the significant comma rules indicates that a comma should be used to set off a substantive in direct address. The following sentences illustrate this rule:

"Tom, for once you are correct."

"For once, Tom, you are correct."

"For once you are correct, Tom."

It will be noted that two of the illustrations require the use of one comma, while the other requires the use of two. It seems obvious that each of these variations must be taken into account in making an ap-

praisal of pupil mastery of these skills, for each is a specific learning situation. Preliminary evidence on this point indicates that the usage represented by the first example accounts for almost exactly one-half of the usages of this type by elementary school children. In general, it may be concluded tentatively at least that emphasis on the variations when the person addressed introduces the sentence and when it closes the sentence will account for about 85 per cent of the occasions when it will arise. From the standpoint of efficiency in the development of these skills, drill emphasis on the first and third type of sentence shown above would be most productive since they appear to bear the major social burden in this particular area of skill. Much more critical work needs to be done along these lines in other language skills.

(To be continued)

## ADVENTURE IN READING

(Continued from page 205)

an adventure. Let us keep it free from dogmas, and theories, and measurements of reaction. Let us steep ourselves in the best there is, knowing that some contagion of our own enjoyment will spread to the children with whom we come in contact. With such aid, and the impetus of their own adventuring minds, they will find in books that which is known to them, that which they have never known before; dreams, too; things imagined; things and people as real as bread or salt; and shadows, echoes, possibilities which they have never understood, which shake them with unknown wonder and beauty, as Kipling was shaken by the song heard in the failing night. This is adventure, a daring feat.

### BOOKS MENTIONED

- The Story of Dr. Doolittle*. Hugh Lofting. Stokes.  
*Rootabaga Stories*. Carl Sandburg. Harcourt.  
*The Short History of Discovery*. Hendrik W. Van Loon. McKay.  
*The Golden Basket*. Ludwig Bemelmans. Viking.  
*Floating Island*. Anne Parrish. Harper.  
*With Cap and Bells*. Mary Gould Davis. Harcourt.  
*Honk the Moose*. Philip D. Stong. Dodd.  
*High Water*. Philip D. Stong. Dodd.  
*The White Stag*. Kate Seredy. Viking.  
*Breakfast with the Clowns*. Rosalie Slocum. Viking.  
*The Wonder World of Ants*. Wilfred S. Bronson. Harcourt.  
*Sea-Horse Adventure*. Irmengarde Eberle and Else Bostelmann. Holiday House.  
*Early One Morning in the Spring*. Walter de la Mare. Macmillan.  
*Peking Picnic*. Anne Bridge. Little.  
*Progress and Catastrophe*. Stanley Casson. Harper.  
*Something of Myself*. Rudyard Kipling. Doubleday.

# New Books for Children

## Animals

*Sea Horse Adventure.* By Irmengarde Eberle and Else Bostelmann. Illus. by Else Bostelmann. Holiday House, 1937. \$2.00.

The fact that Mrs. Bostelmann was staff artist on four of Dr. Beebe's expeditions assures the reader that the information is scientifically accurate. The fantastic realities of the submarine world are presented in a good narrative, and beautiful drawings.

*Trixie.* Stories of the Circus as told by "Bob Barton." Illus. by C. Walter Hodges. Dutton, 1937. \$2.00.

The true story of a circus orang-utan. Her life and travels, and the behind-the-scenes glimpses of a great circus make absorbing reading for boys and girls. The book is bound to be popular.

*Ki-Ki, a Circus Trouper.* By Edith Janice Craine. Illus. by Kurt Wiese. Albert Whitman, 1937. \$1.50.

A good little story of an aspect of circus life not generally regarded—the family life of circus troupers. The main characters are Ki-Ki, a trick dog, and Peter, the clown's son.

*Chee-Chee's Brothers.* By Gertrude Robinson. Illus. by Glenna M. Latimer. Dutton, 1937. \$1.50.

The introduction states that "the outstanding trait" of mallard ducks is "their

utter dependence on friendships, that once set up, are never abandoned." This is a story of a baby mallard brought up with tame fowls.

*Hop, Skip, and Fly.* Stories of Small Creatures. By Irmengarde Eberle. Illus. by Else Bostelmann. Holiday House, 1937. \$2.00.

Although the creatures speak, they do so entirely "in character." The information is thoroughly scientific. Like all the publications of this house, the book is beautiful typographically.

*Cheeky, a Prairie Dog.* By Josephine Sanger Lau. Illus. by Kurt Wiese. Albert Whitman, 1937. \$1.50.

Nature material well handled. The little prairie dog has narrow escapes from enemies in babyhood, is made a pet by a little girl, and finally is returned to his prairie-dog village. Entertaining and consistent.

*Dogs at Play.* By Paul Hubner. Photographs with text. Dutton, 1937. \$1.00.

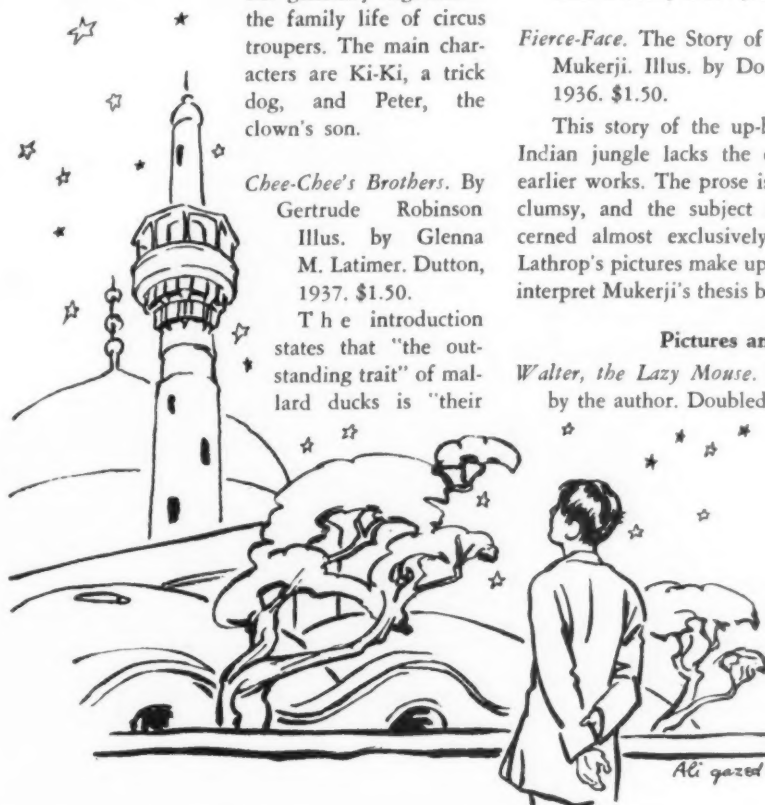
*Fierce-Face.* The Story of a Tiger. By Dhan Gopal Mukerji. Illus. by Dorothy P. Lathrop. Dutton, 1936. \$1.50.

This story of the up-bringing of a tiger in the Indian jungle lacks the enchantment of Mukerji's earlier works. The prose is sometimes confusing and clumsy, and the subject matter, naturally, is concerned almost exclusively with killing. But Miss Lathrop's pictures make up for all shortcomings; they interpret Mukerji's thesis better than his words.

## Pictures and Fantasy

*Walter, the Lazy Mouse.* By Marjorie Flack. Illus. by the author. Doubleday, Doran, 1937. \$2.00.

Walter's lack of punctuality caused his family and his playmates the frogs, to forget his existence. Naturally, this leaves Walter very lonely. Although Walter wears overalls and underwear, he is still mouselike, and the other creatures retain their



From *Ali Lives in Iran*. By Caroline Singer and Cyrus Le Roy Baldridge. Illus. by the authors. Courtesy of Holiday House.

own essential traits, even in this fantasy. An excellent book.

*Mr. Pumps, the Popsicle Man.* By Eleanor Hubbard Wilson. Illus. by the author. Dutton, 1937. \$1.00.

Children should, by all means, make the acquaintance of Mr. Pumps, who feared he was ill because his own popsicles didn't taste good to him. Young readers will love both text and pictures. Excellent.

*Suki, the Siamese Pussy.* By Leonard Weisgard. Illus. by the author. Thos. Nelson, 1937. \$2.00.

A somewhat sophisticated picture book that will appeal mainly to New York children familiar with river traffic. Suki boards a Staten Island ferry in an attempt to go to Paris, and has a rather dull trip.

*Breakfast with the Clowns.* By Rosalie Slocum. Illus. by the author. Viking, 1937. \$1.00.

A little girl and her father watch the circus unload, and eat breakfast with the clowns. Good for reading aloud to young children.

*Twin Kids.* By Inez Hogan. Illus. by the author. Dutton, 1937. \$1.00.

Although it seems impossible that anyone could equal Nicodemus in our affections, here is Petunia taking her place beside him. Petunia, black, and sometimes forgetful of her pets, mends her ways when her pets run away. Excellent.

*The Famous Jimmy.* Text by Enid Bryton. Illus. by Benjamin Rabier. Dutton, 1937. \$1.50.

The fable type of story. Jimmy is a duckling who proves very resourceful in difficult situations. Benjamin Rabier is well-known as an illustrator in France.

*Humphrey the Pig.* By Marjorie Knight. Illus. by Clayton Knight. Dutton, 1937. \$1.00.

Humphrey is discontented. He wishes to be a rooster, a duck, a lamb, and finally, a hippopotamus. A dream demonstrates the disadvantages of this last, and Humphrey awakes contentedly piggish.

*Mr. Doomer.* By Dotty Saulsbury. Illus. by Elaine Saulsbury Hitch. Dutton, 1937. \$1.00.

A nonsense story. The whimsey doesn't quite click.

*Claudius the Bee.* By John F. Leeming. Illus. by Richard B. Ogle. Viking, 1937.

Although English critics see in this book a "satirical fantasy of the ordinary outside world," its humor is not international.

*Polly, Prue and Penny.* By Lois Maloy. Illus. by the author. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1937. \$1.00.

Pictures with text. A little girl, her doll, and her dog are the characters.

*The Traveling Coat.* By Frances Eliot. Illus. by the author. Dutton, 1937. \$1.50.

The little coat was made for small Istvan in Hungary. It went to Germany, Holland, England, India, China, and finally, to America where Istvan's great-granddaughter wears it. A loveable little story.

### Far Places

*Shawneen and the Gander.* By Richard Bennett. Illus. by the author. Doubleday, Doran, 1937. \$2.00.

An excellent book from every angle—plot, characterization, illustration, and especially style. The author's style might be described as "vocal," for he makes a reader feel that he is hearing the story told aloud. Ireland is the setting.

*Kees.* By Marian King. Illus. by Elizabeth Enright. Albert Whitman, 1937. \$1.50.

A second edition of this excellent story of Holland. Suitable both as a gift, and as an addition to a children's or school library.

*Wind of the Vikings.* A Tale of the Orkney Isles. By Maribelle Cormack. Illus. by Robert Lawson. Appleton-Century, 1937. \$2.00.

Interesting as a picture of the remote and little-known Orkneys, their racial heritage and way of life.

*Harry in England.* Being the partly-true adventures of H. R. in the year 1857. By Laura E. Richards. Illus. by Reginald Birch. Appleton-Century, 1937. \$1.50.

Children are likely to find this dull. The hero is Faunterloish and there is a forced liveliness in style and incident that isn't communicated to the readers.

*Blue Nets and Red Sails.* By Helen Bradley Preston. Illus. by Margaret Temple Braley. Longmans, Green, 1936. \$1.00.

The sardine fisheries of Brittany. The author shows great skill in giving a sense of the French language. The story of two little boys' adventurous day with the fisherman contains much delightful information about the organization of the industry. Illustrations are unusually attractive and bright.

*Greentree Downs.* By M. I. Ross. Illus. by G. M. Richards. Houghton Mifflin, 1937.

The story, told in the first person, of a family of four orphans who go from Ohio to live with a great-uncle in Australia, is raised above the average by original and humorous style, definite and consistent characterization, and interesting setting. There is enough plot to carry it along briskly and pleasantly. Recommended for girls of 12 to 15.



*Jasmine.* By Anna Ratzesberger. Illus. by Kurt Wiese. Albert Whitman, 1937. \$2.00.

A novel of modern Persia (Iran) for older girls. The story involves Iran's attempt to control the opium traffic. There are mystery, excitement, and the question of the position of women, all met by a courageous heroine.

*Ali Lives in Iran.* By Caroline Singer and Cyrus LeRoy Baldridge. Illus. by the authors. Holiday House, 1937. \$1.75.

Zoroastrian Cyrus, Muhammadan Ali, Christian Luke, and Jewish Isaac are hostile neighbors in the old city of Shiraz until the four boys rescue Ali's little sister from the dangerous pool. This leads them to discover that their differences are of little real consequence. The style is somewhat repetitious and explanatory, and the action is long delayed. Nevertheless, the theme and spirit of the book make it of considerable importance today.

*Riddle in Fez.* A Boys' Story of Morocco. By Waldo Fleming. Illus. by Frank Dobias. Doubleday Doran, 1937. \$2.00.

Mr. Fleming can tell an exciting yarn for older boys. He knows his Africa, as his two previous books attest. Two French boys are involved in, and solve (of course) a mystery.

#### Yesterday

*Who Rides in the Dark?*  
By Stephen Meader. Illus. by James MacDonald. Harcourt, Brace, 1937. \$2.00.

A well-written thriller of stagecoach days in New Hampshire. To a reader who knows New Hampshire, the romantic adventure becomes the more glamorous because of the authentic setting. He feels that he is following a

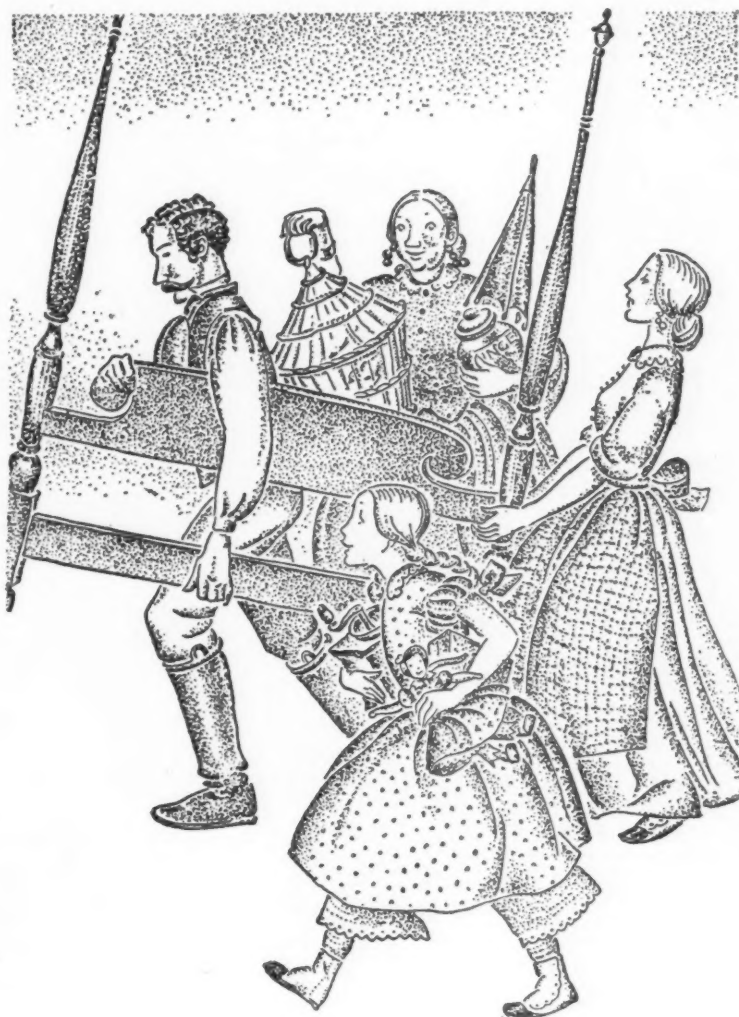
story-teller who is truly faithful to local traditions. Interest never once lags.

*Swords in the Dawn.* A Story of the First Englishmen. By John O. Beaty. Illus. by Henry C. Pitz. Longmans, Green, 1937. \$2.00.

A story of the Danish invasions of England in the fifth century, skillfully written, and carefully based on research. The central plot and the main characters are all factual. Beautiful, vigorous illustrations by Henry Pitz.

*Thord Firetooth.* By Alice Alison Lide and Margaret Alison Johansen. Illus. by Henry Pitz. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1937. \$2.00.

A noble Viking youth is sold as a slave, travels



From *Drusilla*. By Emma L. Brock. Illus. by the author. Courtesy of The Macmillan Company.

across Europe to Constantinople, then back to Norway and on to the New World. A book for older children, beautiful in style, careful in historical detail, and stirring in plot. Recommended.

*Secret of the Circle.* By Alice Alison Lide and Margaret Alison Johansen. Illus. by Vera Bock. Longmans, Green, 1937. \$1.75.

The middle ages, when adventurous merchants from the Hansa cities traveled across Europe to the great fairs. Here is mystery, masquerading character, signs, codes, and subterranean hideouts. Merchants of honored repute and widely famed artists contrast with lepers, beggars, and villainous robbers. The hero is a youth precociously following the ideals of his great merchant father.

*Swift Walker.* A True Story of the American Fur Trade. By Winifred E. Wise. Illus. by Cameron Wright. Harcourt, Brace, 1937. \$2.00.

A "true account of the adventures of a real boy" who in the early 1800's entered the fur trade in Michigan and Illinois. A stirring narrative, by the very nature of its material.

*A Spaniel of Old Plymouth.* By Margaret S. Johnson and Helen Lossing Johnson. Illus. by the authors. Harcourt, Brace, 1937. \$1.75.

Although the central character is Jester, a high-bred Springer, the interest centers in the migration of the Esmond family from England to new colony of Plymouth.

*Drusilla.* By Emma L. Bock. Illus. by the author. Macmillan, 1937.

Drusilla, a cornhusk doll, is worthy of admittance to the beloved company of literary toys which includes Hitty, Poor Cecco, and others. The Hodgetts family journeys west to Minnesota in a covered wagon. The author has caught the atmosphere of pioneer days, and the characters are alive and consistent.

*Privateer Aboy!* A Story of the War of 1812. By Edouard A. Stackpole. Illus. William Morrow, 1937. \$2.00.

Ships, pirates, and prize crews. An exciting way to learn the causes and the course of this war. For older boys.

*The Secret of the Rosewood Box.* By Helen Fuller Orton. Illus. by Robert Ball. Stokes, 1937. \$1.50.

A story of a pioneer family in Michigan in the '80's, and more particularly of the loss, adventures, and recovery of a rosewood bonnet-box.

*A Son of John Brown.* By Charles Henry Lerrigo. Illus. by Orson Lowell. Thos. Nelson, 1937. \$1.75.

The bitterness and excitement of Kansas in the '50's. For older boys and girls.

*Roller Skates.* By Ruth Sawyer. Illus. by Valenti Angelo. Viking, 1936. \$2.00.

The Newbery-prize book of 1937 is the story of a little girl in New York in the 1900's. The story is reminiscent, charming in style, and will perhaps appeal more to grown-ups to whom it will recall their own childhoods, than to children. The illustrations are sketchy and thin—two qualities quite out of keeping with the period described in the story. A distinguished book, nevertheless.

#### Today

*Bright Island.* By Mabel L. Robinson. Illus. by Lynd Ward. Random House, 1937. \$2.00.

A superior book for girls of 12-16. It is the story of Thankful Curtis who goes from her beloved island home off the Maine coast to school on the mainland, and then back to Bright Island. Excellent for realistic character-drawing.

*Private Props.* By Gertrude E. Mallette. Illus. by Loren Barton. Doubleday, Doran, 1937. \$2.00.

Lynn, working as a stenographer, wants to be a newspaper reporter. There is no minimizing of the hard work and disappointment attendant on such an ambition, although the story comes out happily. A novel for older girls.

*The Cruise of the Gull-Flight.* By Sidney Corbett. Illus. by Bernard Westmacott and S. D. Brown. Longmans, Green, 1937. \$2.00

Mystery and excitement on a summer cruise up the Great Lakes from Grosse Ile to the Georgian Bay country. Landlubbers can gain considerable information about ships and sailing from the book.

*Honey Chile.* By Anna



From *The Secret of the Rosewood Box.* By Helen Fuller Orton. Illus. by Robert Ball. Courtesy of Frederick A. Stokes Company.

Braune. Illus. by the author. Doubleday, Doran, 1937. \$2.00.

A little girl on an Alabama plantation. The story creates the atmosphere of a southern summer. Negro dialect is very well handled.

*Sad-Faced Boy*. By Arna Bontemps. Illus. by Virginia Lee Burton. Houghton Mifflin, 1937. \$2.00.

Slumber is a sad-faced black boy from Alabama,

who, with his two brothers, captures Harlem with his harmonica. Well written.

*The Lost "Chicken Henry."* By Ned Andrews. Illus. Morrow, 1937. \$2.00.

"Chicken Henry" is a silver mine in Arizona on the land of two homesteading boys. Written by the author of "Jerky" who is a cattleman and knows his West.

(To be continued)

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# Editorial

## Magic Highways

THIS YEAR'S Book Week slogan is "Reading—the Magic Highway to Adventure." Science has given literature two new forms of expression, however, the cinema and the radio, and a discussion of adventure should take account of them. But since this, obviously, is too wide a subject for brief consideration, let us consider only vicarious adventure sought by children in two of these—reading and radio. These are two magic highways, and, to carry the figure further, both roads are bordered with dangers to inexperienced travelers. Yet so much that is good is to be had from the journey, either by radio or books, that the judicious, or even those who are alert need not suffer.

Children, especially, need guidance and advice. In the case of radio, teachers may give this, perhaps, by strongly emphasizing feature radio programs—a talk by Sir Hubert Wilkins on the use of submarines in the exploration of the polar regions, the first docking of the *Queen Mary*, the broadcasting of rescue work in flood, presentations of Shakespearean plays. Without some such guidance, children may become victims of the bizarre and sensational. Night after night broadcasts feature lurid accounts of crime and its punishment, ghost stories, episodes in the lives of criminals compiled and dramatized from court records. Obviously, when children take the radio road to adventure, they need a wise and understanding guide.

Less perilous, and more alluring is the

reading highway. Well chosen books of adventure may win the interest of even an ardent radio devotee. There are few urges to reading more powerful than adventure; even the slow reader finds himself in headlong pursuit of the adventure story.

This year several uncommonly good books of adventure await young readers. To glimpse but two or three titles on the bookseller's counter, there are Stephen Meader's *Who Rides in the Dark?*, Gregory Trent's *Hunters Long Ago*, and Alice Allison Lide and Margaret Allison Johnson's *Secret of the Circle*. Books like these furnish adventure *par excellence*. Companion volumes are numerous if we include old books as well as new. This Book Week would be a fine occasion indeed if we encouraged children to read and reread these older adventure books—books like *Highwayman—A Book of Gallant Rogues* by Charles Finger, and *The Desert Island Adventure Book—True Tales of Famous Castaways*. And of course the tramp, tramp of adventure books comes thumping down the centuries in the classics of world literature—Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*—Like the echoing footsteps of the Gods of the Mountain, such books ring with enchantment. They are the spirit of immortal adventure.

Good books, good radio programs, with teacher and librarian to point the way, and adventure to lend zest and excitement—these insure a happy journey.



# Shop Talk

## The National Conference on Research in English

THE National Conference on Research in English has announced a new plan for handling its publications. Under a recent agreement, Scott, Foresman and Company will publish and distribute Conference bulletins and handbooks. THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, which retains serial rights on all Conference publications, will continue as in the past the publication of official papers. This new arrangement enlists for The Conference the facilities of a well known educational publishing house along with the advantages of an official connection with a periodical.

The aims of The Conference, which are to stimulate research in elementary school English, and to publish the results of scientific investigations, can best be attained by publishing arrangements such as these. Since the active membership of the Conference was deliberately limited in the original charter, the policy has been to reach a growing audience through program meetings, and an increasing number of readers through publication.

The Conference is a co-operative, educational enterprise. It is organized under the laws of the State of Michigan as a non-profit corporation.

Forthcoming publications of The Conference include two bulletins and a handbook for the use of children in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. The handbook—*A Manual of Style in Elementary School English*—is being prepared by Dr. Robert C. Pooley of the University of Wisconsin, Miss Delia E. Kibbe of the Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, and Dr. Lou La Brant of the State University of Ohio. *Grading Children's Books* by Dr. Carleton Washburne, Mrs. Mabel Vogel Morphet and Miss Vivian Weedon, and *A Summary of Recent Research in Elementary School English* by Dr. E. A. Betts are the titles of the two forthcoming research bulletins.

The six bulletins and reports already issued by The Conference are:

1. *Research in Elementary Language: A Report of Problems and Progress*—First Annual Research Bulletin, by Harry A. Greene, Director, Bureau of Educational Research and Service, University of Iowa, Iowa City. February, 1933. With critiques by E. J. Ashbaugh, Robert C. Pooley, Dora V. Smith, Percival M. Symonds, and M. R. Trabue. Published serially in THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, March to September, 1933.
2. *A Critical Summary of Selective Research in Elementary School Composition, Language, and Grammar*—Second Annual Research Bulletin, by Walter Scribner Guiler, School of Education, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, and Emmett Albert Betts, Director of Teacher Education, State Normal School, Oswego, New York. February, 1934. Published serially in THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, March-June, 1934. Appraisal by E. A. Betts and critique by Paul McKee published in THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW. September, 1934. Supplement to the Second Annual Research bulletin by E. A. Betts published in THE REVIEW, December, 1934.
3. *Reading Disabilities and Their Correction: A Critical Summary of Selective Research*—Third Annual Research Bulletin, by Emmett A. Betts, Director of Teacher Education, State Normal School, Oswego, New York. February, 1935. Published serially in THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, March-June, 1935. Critiques by Arthur I. Gates, Donald D. Durrell, and William S. Gray published in THE REVIEW for April, 1935.
4. *Research Problems in Reading in the Elementary School*—Fourth Annual Research Bulletin, by D. D. Durrell, School of Education, Boston University. February, 1936. With critiques by Arthur I. Gates, William S. Gray, and Paul McKee. Published serially in THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, March-December, 1936.
5. *Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition*—Fifth Annual Research Bulletin, by Harry A. Greene, Director, Bureau of Educational Research and Service, University of Iowa, Iowa City. February, 1937. With critiques by Herbert B. Bruner, Ethel Mabie Falk, R. L. Lyman, Fannie J. Ragland, M. R. Trabue, and Clare M. Young. Published serially in THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, March, May, and forthcoming issues.
6. *Bibliography of Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English, 1925-1934*—Committee Report Number 1, by Josephine H. MacLachy, Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, Chairman, with an Overview by Bess Goodykoontz, Assistant United States Commissioner of Education. February, 1936. Published serially in THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW. December, 1935, January, February, 1936.

## The Newbery Award

*Roller Skates*, by Ruth Sawyer, published by the Viking Press, is this year's winner of the Newbery Medal—the annual award for the "most distinguished juvenile book written by a citizen or resident of the United States and published during the preceding year."

The medal is the gift of Frederic G. Melcher, editor of the *Publishers' Weekly*, and is named for the eighteenth century bookseller and publisher with whose publication of *Goody Two-shoes* and other children's books, the history of children's literature really begins.

The award was made at the meeting of the American Library Association in New York City in June.

#### Book Week Bulletin Board

Teachers and librarians in search of attractive bulletin board material for book week will be glad to learn that they may secure illustrated specimen pages of Holiday House books. There is a charge of ten cents (which may be remitted in stamps) to cover postage and handling; for this sum, ten illustrations will be mailed. Address Holiday House, 225 Varick Street, New York City.

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